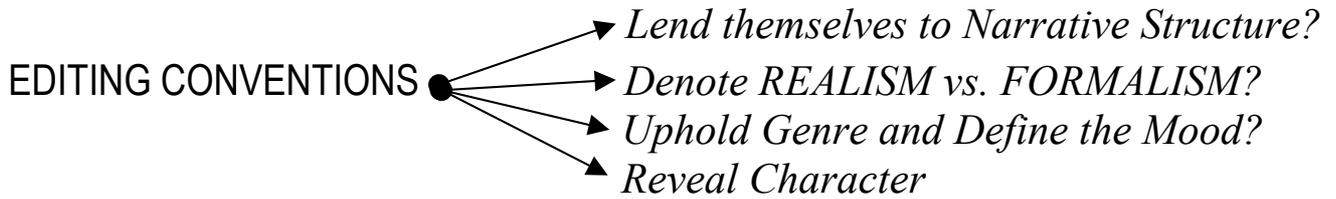


IB FILM – DISCUSSION ON EDITING TERMS & PATTERNS IN FILM

Overriding Themes: How does EDITING convey meaning to accompany thematic and narrative ideas in film texts? In other words, how do...



BASIC TERMINOLOGY

Editing	The process by which the editor combines the coordinated individual shots into a cinematic whole. This is both a technical craft (the digital tools) and an art (the decisions regarding where to go next, and when)
Cut	The break point. The joining of two separate clips. The juxtaposition of alternate angles, takes, characters, ideas, and actions. We strive to make these invisible in realism (<i>verisimilitude</i>), but more apparent and affecting in formalistic approaches (<i>antirealism</i>) where film language tends to be apparent, or even aggressively <i>in-your-face</i> .
Shot	The basic building block of editing. Shots are individually edited “takes,” measured in <i>time terms</i> from cut to cut, and commonly described in ways that can pertain to composition (OTS), framing (CU), movement (PAN) or narrative purpose (POV).
Frame	Cuts are made on exact frames (in film, there are 24 of these in one second). Consider the effect of holding for more (or alternatively eliminating some) and how this affects the audiences absorption of the information delivered by the shot.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Continuity In maintaining continuity, the editor is primarily concerned with two main areas:

- **Spatial Relationships between shots:** Defining the space (setting), manipulating its vastness or cramped nature, Maintaining Screen Direction (the 180-degree rule), and upholding continuity in the placement of props, gestures, relationships of characters to each other and to their environment.
- Temporal Relationships between shots: Is this story told in **Real Time?** **Linearly?** **Fragmented?** Are there **ellipses** in time? (See *Temporal Patterns* below.)

Rhythm The overall **Rhythm** of each scene (and the film) is heavily controlled by the **Pace** of editing. **Tempo** (fast vs. slow) is the frequency of cuts in any sequence, and this generally speaks to the **intensity of the dramatic action** and the **mood** of the scene. Which shots are short and quickly cut (why?) Which shots are held for longer periods of time (why?). What is the effect of major transitions in tempo between sequences?

Temporal Patterns If film is not completely real-time and linear, then it likely utilizes...

Ellipses: Skipping over periods of time – seconds, minutes, days, years. This is readily understood by audiences, but consider the difference between slight (expected) jumps in time, and dramatic jolts into the future.

Flashback / Flash-Forward: Dramatic jumps in time (usually with the understanding that we will eventually return to the “time period” whence we came.) They serve narrative purposes.

Montage: The juxtaposition of many shots that differ in time, setting, and even subject matter. Intellectual montage was pioneered by Sergei Eisenstein for political purposes during the Russian Revolution, but today it is widely understood that the bombardment of two dissimilar images forces the audience to consider their relationship to each other – thus creating powerful meaning in the associations presented.

In more “pop culture” film editing, the montage is a generic way to show time passing, but something (understood by the audience) being accomplished. [i.e. Rocky coming out of retirement and buffing up... again.] It is often accompanied by **music**, or **voice-over** to help tell the story in a quick and clear manner.

Temporal continuity is of utmost importance in film editing. Where we cut makes the difference between a believable (transparent) edit, and a **jump cut** (where a noticeable glitch gives away the fact that two juxtaposed clips did NOT take place in real time.) When a straight edit (jumping from one shot to another such that either the angle or framing moves by at least 35-45%) is not performed, a few more artistic options exist:

Match-On-Action Cut: Movement within the frame is disorienting enough such that a highly different shot will seem to meld better with its predecessor. When doing this. Action to Similar Action (and in the same screen direction) helps in the avoidance of a jump cut.

Graphic Match Cut: The shape, color, or texture in the forms depicted in a shot have a direct link with the shape, color, or texture of the following shot. A melding of images occurs.

Eye-line Match Cut: Technically, any POV used after showing a character staring off into a direction will be acceptable. The resulting shot is understood to be in the direction of the “eye-line,” while simultaneously allowing the editor to present new information and jump to a new space without glitches in the continuity.

Narrative Patterns Consider the effect of the order of shots and how they reveal new information.

Typical Example 1: *Shot / Reverse Shot* The most common approach to Dialogue. It makes sense to us and allows frequent cuts so that editor has total control over the intimacy and information within the shots.

Typical Example 2: Traditional moving from... *Wide (Establishing)* ...to... *MS (Action)* ...to... *CU (Intimacy w/ Characters' Emotions)* ...to... *Cutaway (New Information)*

Dual Action: *Parallel Editing:* Cutting between two or more actions happening at the same time, but at different locations. (A murder and a baptism, as in *The Godfather*.)

Cross-Cutting: cutting back and forth between two or more actions occurring at the same time and usually in the same place (as in a chase scene: the pursuing predator is cut against the fleeing prey.)

Intercutting: Cutting between two scenes that generally have heavy associative meaning, but may happen at different times. (A married couple is making love, but the scene is cut with flashes of extramarital encounters with their respective lovers.) Frequently used in “visions.”

Non-Straight Cuts Generally rare in modern filmmaking, but worthy of exploration if you see them used, are the following meaningful “transitions” from one shot to another:

Fades suggest ellipses, or a break in time, place, or action. The most common are the **Fade-In** and **Fade-Out** at the beginning or end of films / scenes. *Dissolves* are the most common non-cut transition – a “fade” from one shot to another. Shot B is slowly superimposed over Shot A, indicating the passage of time. Quick vs. Slow fades suggest the AMOUNT of time passed.

The use of Wipes, Iris-Shots, Freeze Frames, and Split Screen Effects are worthy of detailed exploration should you come across them. These decisions generally carry a strong message.